

UNCLASSIFIED

AD NUMBER
AD500304
CLASSIFICATION CHANGES
TO: <b>unclassified</b>
FROM: <b>confidential</b>
LIMITATION CHANGES
TO: <b>Approved for public release, distribution unlimited</b>
FROM: <b>Controlling DoD Organization: Office of the Adjutant General, Washington, DC 20310.</b>
AUTHORITY
<b>28 Feb 1981, DoDD 5200.10; AGO ltr 29 Apr 1981</b>

THIS PAGE IS UNCLASSIFIED

# **SECURITY**

---

# **MARKING**

**The classified or limited status of this report applies to each page, unless otherwise marked.**

**Separate page printouts MUST be marked accordingly.**

---

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE ESPIONAGE LAWS, TITLE 18, U.S.C., SECTIONS 793 AND 794. THE TRANSMISSION OR THE REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS IN ANY MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW.

NOTICE: When government or other drawings, specifications or other data are used for any purpose other than in connection with a definitely related government procurement operation, the U.S. Government thereby incurs no responsibility, nor any obligation whatsoever; and the fact that the Government may have formulated, furnished, or in any way supplied the said drawings, specifications, or other data is not to be regarded by implication or otherwise as in any manner licensing the holder or any other person or corporation, or conveying any rights or permission to manufacture, use or sell any patented invention that may in any way be related thereto.

## **DISCLAIMER NOTICE**

**THIS DOCUMENT IS BEST QUALITY  
PRACTICABLE. THE COPY FURNISHED  
TO DTIC CONTAINED A SIGNIFICANT  
NUMBER OF PAGES WHICH DO NOT  
REPRODUCE LEGIBLY.**

CONFIDENTIAL



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (18 Feb 69)

FOR (19) OT-UT-69X001

(11) 27 February 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report (6) Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 173d Airborne Brigade, (A Monograph of HUYNH NGHIEP) 8 January 1969 (U). (2)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Subject monograph is forwarded for information and review in accordance with paragraph 2c, AR 525-15.
2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from information obtained during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

*Kenneth G. Wickham*

KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

1 Incl  
as

DISTRIBUTION:

Commanding Generals

US Continental Army Command

US Army Combat Developments Command

Commandants

US Army War College

US Army Command and General Staff College

US Army Adjutant General School

US Army Air Defense School

US Army Armor School

US Army Aviation School

US Army Chemical School

US Army Civil Affairs School

US Army Engineers School

US Army Field Artillery School

US Army Infantry School

US Army Intelligence School

MAR 25 1969

Regraded unclassified when separated  
from classified inclosure.

CONFIDENTIAL

1114 1003 650

WHITE SECTION	
DOC	BUFF SECTION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DATE	
DISTRIBUTION	
DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY CODES	
9	
SPECIAL	

# DISTRIBUTION (Cont'd)

US Army Medical Field Service School  
 US Army Military Police School  
 US Army Missile and Munitions School  
 US Army Ordnance School  
 US Army Quartermaster School  
 US Army Security Agency School  
 US Army Signal School  
 US Army Southeastern Signal School  
 US Army Special Warfare School  
 US Army Transportation School

## Copies furnished:

Office, Chief of Staff, US Army  
 Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations  
 Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel  
 Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development  
 Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence  
 The Provost Marshal General  
 Defense Documentation Center  
 Security Officer, Hudson Institute  
 Air University Library  
 Commanding Generals  
   US Army Flight Training Center  
   173d Airborne Brigade  
 Commanding Officer, US Army Limited War Laboratory

CONFIDENTIAL

A MONOGRAPH OF HUYNH NGHIEP

Prepared By:

24th Military History Detachment (Airborne)  
173d Airborne Brigade  
APO San Francisco 96250

"This document contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U. S. C., Section 793 and 794. Its transmission or the revelation of its contents in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law."

8 January 1969

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS  
DOD DIRECTIVE 5200.10

FOR OT UT  
69X001  
INCLOSURE

CONFIDENTIAL  
3..

# CONFIDENTIAL

## CONTENTS

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Introduction	1
Early Childhood (1908 - 1922)	1
Schooling (1922 - 1927)	1
Farming (1927 - 1945)	2
Observations of the French	2
Viet Minh Associations (1945 - 1955)	2
Communist Party Membership	3
Duty in North Vietnam (1955 - 1961)	4
Foreign Advisers	6
Return to South Vietnam (1961)	6
A Typical Days Schedule	8
Events Leading to Capture	8
Psychological Warfare	10
Quality of Men and Units	11
Opinions of the War	12
Closing Remarks	13
Historian's Evaluation of Information	14
Acknowledgements	14

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE A

INTRODUCTION: The following is a monograph of HUYAN NGHIEP, a Viet Cong economic cadre member. HUYAN<sup>NH</sup> was captured on Operation Dan Sinh on 26 November 1966 by B Co, 1st Bn (ABN) 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. He is of particular historical interest due to his long political affiliation with the Viet Cong and the Viet Cong and his period of study in North Vietnam.

EARLY CHILDHOOD (1908 - 1922): "My father was HUYAN LIEN and my mother was L. T. I. My parents were farmers in An Son (H) Phuoc An (V) Tuy Phuoc (D) Binh Dinh (H). Economically we were members of the middle class. There were three children in my family and I was the oldest, as there was a young brother and sister. There was no formal religion studied in my family, but we had much respect for the elders and believed all that they believed and taught to us. Our hamlet never had any connection with the Emperor. I think An Son was too far removed from the Province capital (Qui Nhon) to have much influence over us. I am not even sure who the Emperors were during my youth."

"In my childhood there was a feud in my family between my uncle and my father. The feud was over the ownership of land and property, and it was not settled until 1920, when my uncle died. Because of the continuous fighting between these two, both of whom I loved very much, my memories of early childhood are not very happy ones."

SCHOOLING (1922 - 1927): "I started school in 1922 when I was fourteen years old. The school I went to was in Duong An (V) Tuy Phuoc (D). We did not learn the Vietnamese language. It was one of the 'old' schools, and we studied the Chinese language and used Chinese characters. We also studied Chinese and Vietnamese stories, fables and parables. What I mean by 'old' school is that it was a private institution originated by the elders of the village. Our teachers were the well educated farmers of the village, who would volunteer their services to teach the young men of the surrounding hamlets. The school day would start at 7 o'clock in the morning and the first session would continue until 12 o'clock. At 12 o'clock I would return to my father's house for lunch and then rest until 2 o'clock, when the second part of our school day began. The second session continued until 5 o'clock, and this would complete the school day. After school I would return home, help my father with the chores and study. I never studied anything about Communism in school. I did not learn of Communism until the late 1940's."

"There was no social life in my school, neither were there any athletic activities. I had a friend, though, who knew Karate, and I learned from him all of the moves he knew. I was proud of this. By the time that I left school I was an expert at Karate, but never have used this knowledge and, as all of the moves that I knew were defensive moves, I could never have attacked anyone."

"I stayed in school for five years, or until I was nineteen. There was no such thing as grades or graduation; your status was determined

(1)

INCL

CONFIDENTIAL



## CONFIDENTIAL

by classes and I finished the fifth class. The average student in my hamlet went only three classes, but I enjoyed school very much and as my father did not need me to help him work, I continued to attend. I had many friends at school and I enjoyed learning very much. I would say that the five years I spent in school were some of the happiest years of my life."

FARMING (1927 - 1945): After my schooling, as my parents, I became a farmer. I owned a little over two hectares of land in my family's hamlet (one hectare = 2.471 acres). In an average year I would produce three crops of rice, one crop of sugar cane and one crop of beans. I was married for the first time in 1929 when I was 21 years old. My wife's family had moved to a neighboring hamlet in 1928 and I had known her six months before our marriage. We lived together for one year, a very happy year, and then my wife and our child died in childbirth. I remained single until 1932, then remarried. I had known my second wife for two years before we married but our meetings had not been frequent and, sadly, I never really knew her until after we were married. Neither my family or I got along very well with my second wife because she proved to be very lazy and lacked what we considered to be normal intelligence. I left her in 1934 after two years of childless marriage." (HUYNH said that this was thought of as a formal divorce.)

"I was very careful in choosing a third wife and did not remarry until 1943. My third wife was the only daughter of a rich merchant. We had known one another for five years before our marriage. We were very happy when married and she bore me four sons." (All sons are still alive; three of the sons are members of the ARVN Army and the fourth, the youngest, continues to live with HUYNH's wife.)

OBSERVATIONS OF THE FRENCH: "I remember the French as cruel, brutal and corrupt oppressors and conquerors. I hated to even see them. I had a friend who worked for the railroad (now the Vietnamese National railway) and he was under the direct control of the Frenchmen. Whenever he did something wrong he was kicked and beaten. This attitude was not unusual to the French. They acted just like the unthinking colonists that they are."

VIET MINH ASSOCIATIONS (1945 - 1955): "My hatred for the French and their treachery and false promises prompted me to join a Viet Minh National Survival Youth Group in 1945, as so many other young Vietnamese did. This was a relatively new organization then, and as I was about eight years older than all the other members, after about two months I quit this organization and joined the Viet Minh Farmers Association. This was not a Communist organization so much as it was an anti-French movement. I joined because of love for my country."

"I was very successful in this organization and before the year was over I was elected, by secret ballot, the secretary of our local chapter. No one was paid wages in the association, everyone, like myself, was a volunteer. The cadre of this organization had a meeting once every month and all the members would meet every three months. The meeting places

(2)

INCL

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

were changed every month because if we were caught by the French we would have been severely punished and perhaps killed. These meetings would usually last for about two hours in the late evening. At the monthly meetings we would plan what we attempted to accomplish for the following month. When all the members were together every third month we would evaluate our past actions and, once again, plan on what to do in the future. There were about 180 members in the Association from my hamlet and the surrounding villages and hamlets."

COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERSHIP: "I held the position of secretary in the Farmer's Association until 1951, when I was reduced to an ordinary member. My responsibilities were taken away not as a punishment but, as I said before, I was a member of the middle class and I had some rich relatives, so some people feared that I might share sentiments with the wealthy. Even though I was very proud to be secretary, I was able to understand their fears, even if they were not justified. It was in this period that the Farmer's Association became less a nationalistic organization and more of a Communist organization. The transition did not come overnight. As I said, the organization was very large by this time; many members had fought during the war (World War II) and had heard of Communism. People, who I now recognize were acting as Communist agents, would also come and talk with us, telling us to make attempts to overthrow the government and to push the Frenchmen out. This is what the Vietnamese villagers wished to hear, for they also spoke of land redistribution for all Vietnamese and our own government, a people's government. I officially became a member of the Communist Party in 1950, and from this time on spent the greater part of my time in getting other members for the party and telling the people of the benefits to come from Communism."

"The mission of the Farmer's Association was the redistribution of land. In the old days the rich, especially the French and their cohorts, the Vietnamese people who collaborated with them, took land away from the poor, often using treachery and other deceitful means. To give you an example of this I need only to recall what happened to one of my friends. My friend was a very successful farmer. One year there was a sickness in his family and his wife and oldest son died. Since he and his other two sons were also sick for the better part of the year, he was unable to work his fields. He got a loan from a rich French landowner with the understanding that he would pay the loan back after one year. There was a contract written up to this effect but there was also a verbal agreement that if the farmer couldn't repay the money at the end of a year he would be allowed some extra time in repaying the loan. At the end of one year my friend asked for another month's time and guaranteed the Frenchman his money if he were allowed this extra month. The Frenchman reneged on his word and confiscated my friend's land. Shortly after time, my friend died, as much from heartbreak as anything else, and left two sons without parents."

"This is the type of person that the association was working against. We attempted by bargaining and peaceful persuasion to get the rich to either return land to its rightful owners or, if that was not possible, to offer some sort of reimbursement to them in the form of money, cattle or

(3)

INCL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

[illegible]

DATA IN NORTH VIETNAM (1955 - 1960): "In late 1954, it was decided by the Farmer's Association that I was to go to North Vietnam for technical training and education. I did not volunteer to go because I did not want to leave my family, but it was guaranteed that I would be back in North Vietnam within three years. I must admit that I was eager to see Paris and was looking forward to learning more about crop irrigation and production and learn more of Communism and how it was working in North Vietnam. I saw my family for the last time in January of 1955 when I started on the trip north."

"I arrived in North Vietnam in April, after traveling by foot for three months. Because of my age (43) I was assigned to work in the production bloc. In North Vietnam every hamlet has a production bloc made up of about 300 men. The bloc is divided into production cells, composed of twenty men each. Our production bloc, like most others, devoted all its time to producing rice. I do not know why, but I found that rice in the north must be watched closer than the rice in the south. If not, you will not have a successful crop. Even though I later reached the position of production cell leader, I never received any instruction in bookkeeping or accounting to prepare me for my job to-be in South Vietnam as a financial and economic cadre member."

"A typical day in North Vietnam would begin at 5:30, when everyone awoke. The young men had a physical training program at 6:00, then everyone would shower and have breakfast. At about 8 o'clock the work day would begin and continue until 11 o'clock, when we would take a break for lunch and rest. Work would resume at 1 o'clock and would continue until 5 o'clock. From 5 o'clock until 6:30 we had time for dinner, to rest and casually talk. At 6:30 all would rest and read the newspaper. From 7:00 until 9:00 we would have classes. For the most part we studied rice production methods and mathematics."

"On Sundays of every week there was a special two-hour class for members of the Communist party like myself. These classes would revolve around the political theories of Communism. The first year I attended these classes we studied Lenin, but this stopped after one year because there were some doubts relating to Lenin's ideology. I thought that we would have classes on Mao Tse Tung and Ho Chi Minh but we never did. I think that the reason we didn't have many classes dealing with political

(4)

INCL

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

theory is due to the fact that South Vietnam kept talking about invading North Vietnam, and for that reason all resources were deployed towards production of food in case there should be a military campaign. At times we saw films made in the United States relating to better methods of production and the construction of factories. The quality of these films was very good and we learned much from them. The meals in North Vietnam consisted of the same items I have had all of my life; rice three times a day and fish and vegetables when available. When I was in North Vietnam I worked in DUONG MINH (H) DUONG MINH (V) QUYNH LUO (P) NGHE AN (D)."

"We didn't train with weapons for very long. The only instructions I ever had with firearms was a three-day class on the structure and firing of a .45 caliber pistol and a one-day class on the use of a French sub-machine gun. I have never liked rifles and machine guns but the pistol was nice. Later, back in South Vietnam, I carried a .45 caliber pistol for a while because my leaders told me I needed it for self-protection. It became too bothersome, though, so I returned it and have not carried a weapon since."

"When working and going to classes I never had much contact with the North Vietnamese. All the people I worked with were from South Vietnam. It was generally thought and understood that we from South Vietnam would some day return to the south, and by aiding the people economically we would liberate the people from the puppet government of South Vietnam, so that they could then form their own government, modeled on the Communist style."

"Every year in North Vietnam a person is given fifteen days special leave. I spent all of my special leave time in Hanoi, and visited that city five different times, staying with a friend's family. I was very much disappointed with Hanoi. At one time I am sure that it must have been a great city but now it is too old and is very dirty. When I was in Hanoi the central power was always failing and we always lacked electricity. I think that Saigon and Nha Trang are much nicer cities than Hanoi. I was treated extremely well in North Vietnam. The party gave me and most of the South Vietnamese better food, clothing and lodging than most of the North Vietnamese received."

"I believe the Communist regime of Ho Chi Ming in North Vietnam started out with good intentions. Originally, they were trying to raise the standard of living and create equality among the people, but this did not come about. The Communists did raise the standard of living somewhat by creating and organizing cooperatives, but what they failed to do in creating cooperatives was to establish equality and instill in the people a sense of humanity. All was too objective; too impersonal. The people kept being told that better times were coming, and that the ricelands would be redistributed to them, but while I was in North Vietnam this never happened. I do not know how or why they failed but they did. Equality and humanity are two things that are important to all people; without them no nation can be successful. It is just not possible."

(5)

INCL

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

"The people of North Vietnam seemed to have a great respect for President Diem, of South Vietnam. Once, President Diem was captured by the Communists. Ho Chi Minh ordered that he not be killed, for he wanted to persuade Diem to work for the Communist cause. Later, Diem, with the help of the Japanese, fled. The reason that Diem was such a good politician and considered to be so smart may be attributed to the fact that he started at the very bottom and worked his way to the top. He had very much experience and knew the best way to perform almost all jobs connected with politics. I think that the Diem government was more forceful, had better policies and, overall, was much better than the present government of South Vietnam. I was very sorry when I learned that Diem had died."

"It is my opinion that the government of North Vietnam is more swift than it is just. Many prisoners have been sentenced to death by firing squads and others, not as dangerous, are sent into confinement, to be re-educated or rehabilitated. Personally, I have never witnessed any executions, but in 1958 there were three people that worked in my cell that were found guilty of instigation corruption. They were taken away and I never saw them again. It was my understanding that those that are taken away for rehabilitation draw two pairs of clothes and two pairs of shoes a year from a central supply room. This supply room also gives the prisoners all the tools needed to work the soil. Then, they must provide for themselves and attend classes twice weekly until the government thinks they have been rehabilitated. There is no set time that they must remain. Perhaps some leave within a year and some will end up dying there."

FOREIGN ADVISERS: "When I was in North Vietnam our production bloc had Chinese advisers from 1957 through 1959. I also know that during the same time span the economy sections had two East German advisers. The Chinese advisers in our section worked with us in soil improvement and showed us how to increase our production of rice. In the economy section the East Germans supervised the building of dams and factories. Advisers worked with the people only on certain specified missions, and if any mission would last over a year, the advisers would rotate every six months. My overall impression of the advisers is a good one. They were efficient and seemed to know the most practical and expedient methods of going about their tasks, but I suppose that is what they are trained for. I have never been aware of any foreign advisers working anywhere in South Vietnam for the Viet Cong or North Vietnamese."

"Unlike in the Viet Cong, in North Vietnam you will find corruption. As an example, there is probably no better case than my own. When I was in North Vietnam I was fortunate enough to find a Parker pen. I was aware that a Parker pen costs 2,000 piasters in North Vietnam and was planning on selling it. The political officer of our production cell became aware of the pen and told me that I had to sell it to him for 500 piasters. I tried to argue with him, but he said that was the rule. In the end, he bought the pen for 500 piasters and I was, quite literally and very simply, cheated."

RETURN TO SOUTH VIETNAM (1961): "I left North Vietnam in June of 1961, infiltrating back into my country with an infiltration group designated

(6)

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

as the Third Group. This group consisted of twenty men, ten of whom were armed with carbines with three magazines each. I did not carry a weapon and arrived in South Vietnam in October of 1961. It was then that I began my work as a Viet Cong, which continued until I was captured."

"At first, I was the funds keeper of a Viet Cong purchasing store. This store was located in Van Canh (V) Hoai Nhon (D) Binh Dinh (1). My mission was to help arrange for the purchase of rice and other foodstuffs for the Viet Cong, Viet Cong Montagnards and, sometimes, for North Vietnamese units. As I said, I had been trained to form a Farmer's Association group, and this was really what I wished to do, but was also a good trader and storekeeper, so this is what I always did."

"The organization of a Farmer's Association is based on a very simple principle. A team of Viet Cong cadre will go into a village or hamlet and propagandize the people. The team of cadre will consist of an older man to talk with the elderly men of the village, a young man to talk with the young men of the village and a woman to work with all the women of the village. After the inhabitants are propagandized, the Viet Cong sell tools to the villagers on credit and, in return, expect and receive half the crops that the villagers produce. The entire process of winning a village over to the Viet Cong side is to take one and one-half years."

"In theory this reads well, but in actual practice I do not know of this plan working in over a year in Binh Dinh Province. For one thing, there must always be a certain number of personnel on guard to warn of Allied helicopters and troops while the others are working in the fields. Secondly, prior to working in a new field foxholes and bunkers must be built. Thus, because of all the manpower needed for these things, production is slowed down greatly. More discouraging than this, though, is the fact that the allied troops and helicopters are always coming across the fields and destroying the crops with chemicals or fire. It is very hard to keep a field hidden for a long period of time. The Allies are too strong now for the Farmer's Association plan to work as it should."

"An interesting fact about our picks and shovels is that we make them from your long iron U-stakes (engineer stakes). We obtain these stakes when an American unit moves out of an area and leaves them behind. They are very easy to mold. When napalm bombs are dropped, we use the metal left to make axes and pots and pans. You leave so very much behind that is valuable."

"Purchasing food for my store has been a big problem these last two years. In 1965 and the first half of 1966 rice was plentiful, and we had very little trouble in purchasing and transporting rice to our units. Now, it is very difficult. The rice is still available, but it is almost impossible to transport it because the Allies know of and patrol all of our transportation routes. Since we pay the government of South Vietnam price we can purchase the rice from government controlled areas as well as from areas under Viet Cong control. I do not know whether or not the people who sell the rice to us know who it is going to. This is because

(7)

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

the Province Chief, Mr. Nam, always appoints a middle man to arrange for the purchase and to do the actual buying. I had no direct contact with the people selling the rice. The price that we paid is usually 30 to 35 piasters per kilo, and the average Viet Cong soldier will consume ninety kilos of rice in a month's time."

A TYPICAL DAYS SCHEDULE: "All of the days one spends as a Viet Cong follow the same pattern. I get up every morning around 5:30. At 6 o'clock we listen to a radio program broadcast from Hanoi. This program tells of the progress of the war and then broadcasts a physical training program that all of the younger men are supposed to participate in. It is mandatory that all Viet Cong personnel listen to this program each day. The program lasts for about twenty minutes. Many people that are lazy skip the program, but if they are fit, nothing is said to them."

"After physical training we wash and eat breakfast. We have no special cooks, in a sense everyone is a cook. We rotate each day. This works out well, because whoever is appointed to cook for the day gets to leave work one hour early. We either grow the rice that we eat or we would take it from my store. Basically, our meals consisted of the same things each day. We have rice three times each day, and when available we would supplement our rice with fish and vegetables."

"As soon as breakfast is over we would go to work. Those who, like myself, do not work in the fields quit work at 10:30 and have from 10:30 until 11:30 to eat our lunch and relax. At 11:30, we have one hour of study. Those who are uneducated study and those who are educated teach. During the summer we have one hour to take a nap before returning to work, and during the monsoon, only one-half hour, as the days are shorter. We then return for work for four more hours and then quit for the day. After we have our supper we again study for two hours, and usually on Thursday of every week we have one hour of political study."

"What we study during this hour usually varies. Sometimes we discuss the philosophy of Hanoi; other times we review our actions in South Vietnam. Except for this one evening of political study, all our other study periods are spent studying the Vietnamese language. Much emphasis is spent on the correct usage of the language. What I enjoy doing during the day is to read. Every Viet Cong unit has a propaganda instruction training center which provides books to read. I read many things, but my favorites are the poems written by To Hieu and the old Vietnamese story, Kieu."

"The day ends at nine o'clock when everyone must go to bed. My sleeping quarters were usually in the store, and the only time that I did not sleep there was when the Allies were nearby, and I would go into the hills."

EVENTS LEADING UP TO CAPTURE: "Before being captured, I was the purchasing agent and funds keeper for the Van Canh village purchasing store. In December of 1966, I received 300,000 piasters from Mr. Le (this name is an alias; I do not know his real name.) Mr. Le is the Chairman of the

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

National Liberation Front in Van Canh village and he had received this money from Mr. Nam, the Viet Cong Province Chief of Binh Dinh Province. My mission with this money was to purchase supplies for the store. The people of ARVN-controlled Van Canh would trade their goods in the store for the honey which the Viet Cong Montagnards produced. Thus, we could keep the Montagnards supplies with the salt, medicine and materials which they did not produce, and the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese units with rice, as needed."

"By March of 1967 I had spent approximately 17,000 piasters and then ARVN and American units swept into Van Canh. I fled into the mountains, leaving 283,000 piasters in a rucksack in my store. After the units withdrew, I returned and found my store burned and all of the money gone. It was either destroyed by the units or captured by them. Because after the units left the ARVN had much tighter control of Van Canh, the store was never re-established. The loss of the funds was reported to Mr. Le, who reprimanded me. My position was cancelled and I was confined to working with the food production cell in Van Canh village. While doing this, I worked with eleven other men, and we produced rice, corn and sweet potatoes. We were restricted to a specific area and were not allowed to attend party meetings, but were never under guard."

"I considered my confinement unfair, because it was not my fault the the funds were lost. Because of this, I wrote to the Central Office informing them of the incident and the action taken. I followed normal protocol and gave the letter to my superior who, in turn, gave it to his superior, and so it supposedly continued to the provincial headquarters, from there to be forwarded to the central office. Whether or not the central office ever received this letter I do not know, as I never received a reply."

"When serving my confinement my attitude was considered very poor. Once, I was approached by a member of the Binh Dinh Province cadre, who asked if I wished to return to North Vietnam. I did not wish to return, as we had been told so many times that the war was almost over, so I was hoping to leave the party after the war and return to my family. I felt that if I returned to the North I would never see them again. When captured, I was in the Vin Thanh mountains on my way to meet with Mr. Nam, the province chief. Though captured before seeing him, I believe he wished to talk to me about returning to North Vietnam."

"When purchasing agent for the store, we collected an average of 250 - 300 kegs of rice per month. This rice was then distributed to a local force battalion (designated C - 17, a Binh Dinh Province local force battalion). Every fifteen days perhaps twenty men armed with carbines would come and collect the rice from the store. This distribution order for the rice would come from Mr. Nam, who is the Executive Officer of this unit. It consisted of three companies, each company with three platoons and each platoon with three squads. Its overall strength was about 100 men; fifty of these were North Vietnamese while the remainder were local Viet Cong."

(9)

CONFIDENTIAL



## CONFIDENTIAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE: "I think that for the most part the Allied psychological warfare program is very effective. We are not allowed to pick up the leaflets that are dropped but often, when we are not with others, our curiosity gets the better of us. I consider your leaflets to be well written and the poetry is very good. There is one drawback to your leaflet dropping: we have no way of knowing if what you say on the leaflets is true or not. We are not allowed to listen to the South Vietnamese radio station and, even if we were, we still have no way of checking on what they say. I have never heard a loudspeaking mission and know nothing of them. I feel that, if you are doing everything that you say on the leaflets, the program cannot help but to be successful. In my experience as a Viet Cong I have known only one person to Chieu Hoi, but I have heard rumors that many people are going over to the government."

"As I said, we are not allowed to listen to the South Vietnamese government radio stations, but after reading some leaflets my curiosity was aroused, and sometimes I would sneak away and tune my radio to these forbidden stations. This is a dangerous thing to do, for if you are caught three times your radio is taken away and you are reprimanded."

"It is getting harder and harder for the Viet Cong to recruit new members into their ranks. The Viet Cong used to be able to send propaganda teams into villages and hamlets and have many young men volunteer their services. This no longer happens. It is much harder to recruit now compared to several years back and especially compared to when the Viet Minh were fighting the French. I think this can be attributed to two reasons. First, the fighting against the French and South Vietnamese Government troops was limited to the roads and the open areas. Now, since the Allies have come to the aid of the South Vietnamese, the fighting is everywhere, in the jungles, the mountains, the forests and the swamps. It is a much harder and a dirtier fight, and the fighting must be done twenty-four hours a day, not for only a few hours in the evening."

"Secondly, the South Vietnamese people, through observing the passing years, have come to realize that the Viet Cong are good talkers but often fail to fulfill their promises to the people. Often, the Viet Cong will go into a village and promise to have all volunteers back in their homes in time to reap the crops. Sometimes they go as far as to say that they will help a village or a hamlet with a new irrigation project or some other community project. When these men never come back, and no projects are begun, the people realize that they have been lied to and, if possible will never again <sup>and</sup> trust the Viet Cong or trust them. Slowly, in village after village and hamlet following hamlet, I feel the Viet Cong are defeating themselves, because they are losing the support of the people, and it is with the people that the strength of the Viet Cong rests."

"I am not saying that the Viet Cong feel they are losing the war; to the contrary, they feel they are winning. I admit that I had this attitude until captured. Propaganda teams tell us that the Allies are disorganized and discouraged and that soon the non-Asiaties will withdraw from the country. Most Viet Cong also feel that the ARVN are not good soldiers."

(10)

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

Their tactics are not good and they are lacking good leadership. The ARVN do have better weapons though, and that is where their power lies. As I said, I also believed the Viet Cong were winning the war. It was not until after my capture that I realized the full strength of the Allies, for I had never been in position to realize your artillery and your helicopters and your large camps. I now feel that the Viet Cong are losing the war, especially as the Viet Cong are losing the hamlets and the villages in the countryside."

"I have noticed in most of the hamlets and villages in this portion of the Highlands few men are to be seen between the ages of 18 and 30. They are all away fighting, or have been killed or wounded. I feel this is prevalent all over North and South Vietnam. I realize that each must fight for his respective side, but this is very sad, because these young people are missing the most productive years of their life. These are the best years for living and working and building a family. I believe this will have a bad effect on both Vietnams. I can not say what the effect will be, for I do not know how long the fighting will last. I think, though, that South Vietnam will be the first to recover, for they will have more help from the Allies to help rebuild their economy. I do not know whether North Vietnam will receive as much help from China and Russia."

QUALITY OF MEN AND UNITS: "It is hard for me to give a direct answer when discussing the quality of the men in Viet Cong units. Our leaders, the officers, are usually chosen for their abilities. For the most part, they work their way up from the ranks. Our leaders do what they are told by their superiors when they can but often they lack the facilities to carry out the orders given them. It is very hard for an officer to order his men to move into an enemy held area when they have little ammunition and no food. When they can, our officers do as told."

"I would say that there is a very good officer-enlisted man relationship. When talking or playing where is virtually no difference between and officer and his men, but when on a mission, both parties are very serious and much respect is shown towards a man's rank. I do not know what would be done to a man who refused to obey an order from his superior, because I have never heard of this happening."

"There is now exception to what I have just said and that is in relation to the political officer. The political officer is usually designated by the district chief, and usually neither the officers or the enlisted men like him. This dislike is partially due to the fact that he has so much power yet he never endangers his life in combat. As an example, I need only to remind you of the Parker pen incident. It is impossible to argue with a political officer, because he knows all of the rules and if the rules available do not suit him he will make up new ones. The political officer has no combat capability and never joins in battle. His only purpose is to lecture on the political theories of Ho Chi Minh and the Communist government and the progress of the war. The political officer may also use discipline and put people into confinement if they are not doing their jobs. Even though this is very seldom done this does not make him any more popular. It is hard to like someone that you fear."

(11)

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

"The discipline of the men is pretty good. When a man does do something wrong there are varying forms of punishment he may receive, depending on what he has done. The lowest form of punishment is nothing more than a reprimand. The man is told to watch his step and all units that he works with are informed of the mistake he has made. The most severe punishment is a jail sentence. The guilty party is sent to an isolated camp with other prisoners, where he is given tools and told to work in the fields. The only food he gets is what he himself produces. If he wants to, the prisoner may have his family accompany him. Most of these jail sentences are for three years, but the sentence does not make much difference. If the guards in charge of the camp think he is rehabilitated before the sentence is up they will allow him to return to his unit. If after three years of imprisonment the guards feel that the prisoner is not yet rehabilitated they will extend his sentence for another period. These camps do not have cells; the prisoners live in regular huts, but they are guarded and are not permitted to leave a specified area. The number of guards depends on the number of detainees in the camp. These prisoners are isolated from everyone else and because of this I do not know the location of any of these camps."

"Between these two extremes is the most common punishment received. If an enlisted man does something wrong, but not bad enough to be imprisoned he is demoted in rank and sent to a different unit in another district. Officers that fall into this category are not demoted, but are only sent to another unit. This practice is unfair, for there should not be any discrimination between officers and enlisted punishment."

OPINIONS ON THE WAR: "When I was in North Vietnam we were told that when we went back to South Vietnam we would work with the people of the hamlets and teach them how to increase their crops, and that the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces would be used only to support the agricultural programs and allow the people to choose their own governing officials. This was not true. I have been back in Vietnam for seven years, and have never been allowed to go into a hamlet and show the people some of the new production methods. I have seen many of my friends die without accomplishing anything. On the way down and here in Vietnam many become sick with malaria. Allied air strikes and artillery shooting kills many. Viet Cong hospitals have a cure for malaria but the medicine has to be brought down from North Vietnam so it is not always available and many people die. I have not seen my family since 1955 and not a day goes by that I do not wonder if I will ever see them again."

"Because of my age and my years with the Viet Cong I have been able to observe unfairness in the Viet Cong ranks. The most common example, and in my opinion the worst, is the practice the Viet Cong have of taking care of a person when he is young and needed and strong, but when you become older and not useful they have a tendency to disregard you and not take very good care of you. I know one district level cadre who became wounded. Because of his age he was not considered very useful, so he was given no medication and died. The Viet Cong have a regulation regarding retirement and old age but it is only weakly enforced."

"I feel that the armies of North Vietnam are invading South Vietnam."

(12)

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

Hanoi says that this is only being done for a 'unified Vietnam' but I do not think this justifies their being here in the force that they are. The North Vietnamese, with the Viet Cong, would have been successful were it not for the American's coming in, for the North Vietnamese are better trained and have more competent leaders than the ARVN."

"As far as who is going to win the war I cannot say. I know that one round of artillery or an air strike costs much money, but the Allies seem to be able to call in artillery and air strikes whenever they wish. The North Vietnamese cannot do this because all ammunition has to be brought down from North Vietnam and this is such a slow and tedious task. I do not feel that any side will win by military force for no one can win the people by military force alone. The side that can have the people of South Vietnam to support them is the side that will be victorious and will have the lasting victory in the end. The Allies keep reporting acts of terrorism by the Viet Cong aimed at the people. If these reports are true the Viet Cong are making a large strategic mistake. The Viet Cong cannot continue to conduct terrorist acts and expect the people to support them."

"I do not know exactly what to think about the Allies helping the government of South Vietnam. There is an ill feeling in me when I think of what effect all of this help will have on Vietnam in the future. The Allies are sending many men over here, and many are dying. Much money is being spent. Somehow, I do not know how or when, the government of South Vietnam is going to have to repay the Allies. Thus, it is probable that Vietnam will be in a position to be exploited by the Allies if they so choose. I hope that the Allies do not follow such a route, but it is possible. I do now know how the government will repay, maybe economically by granting trade rights, or maybe the Allies will expect certain rights in foreign affairs. I feel that whatever is given, it is bound to have a bad effect on the people's future."

CLOSING REMARKS: "Of my four sons, three are now in the ARVN army. I do not know what to say of this because I have had no contact with my family for so long. I have never been allowed to see my family and was allowed to receive and send only two letters a year, as were all of us. These letters were always read by my superiors before being sent and the content was always very little. This is not good, for a person is only half a man when his family is not with him and he cannot look after them or know how they are doing."

"I heard of the bombing halt through Radio Hanoi. The Hanoi government did not have much to say about it, but the impression they gave was that the Allies were losing the war, and therefore the Allies wanted to make peace. I am not sure about this; I do not think either side is really winning too much. I feel that the government of North Vietnam will use the halt for their own good to resupply its units and men."

"I was glad to learn of the free elections in South Vietnam. Radio Hanoi says that the elections were fixed and corrupt, but I do not think that this is true. If these elections were corrupt then I feel that the people of South Vietnam would not vote in them and would take the initiative to do away with the elections."

(13)

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

"All that I have wanted to do now for the past years is to be with my family. I would like to do things for myself and not have anyone tell me or force me to do things. If I had been free to do the things I chose to do these last years I would like to go back to farming. I think that I would enjoy being a wood-worker also, and make a good living and provide for my family. I do not know how many other Viet Cong feel this way, for this kind of talk is considered treacherous and therefore it is not a topic for conversation, but it is what I dream for."

HISTORIANS EVALUATION OF THE INFORMATION: HUYNH is, in a way, appreciative of being captured, for he hopes that eventually he might be returned to a refugee resettlement hamlet and be reunited with his family. While being interviewed, he was most cooperative and appeared to all concerned to be sincere in his answers. Many of the same questions were asked during different sessions and only a few minor discrepancies were noted in his replies. During his initial interrogations, HUYNH revealed information that proved to be most valuable in revealing enemybase camp areas and in planning for future tactical operations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: The Detachment wishes to acknowledge the following for their assistance: The Brigade Intelligence Officer for his approval of this monograph and its content, the 172d Military Intelligence Detachment for this continued assistance in providing interpreters and arranging interviews with HUYNH and SFC Le Van Hiep for his services in interrogating.

UNCLASSIFIED

Security Classification

## DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R &amp; D

(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)

1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author)		2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION	
HQ, OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310		CONFIDENTIAL	
		2b. GROUP	
		4	
3. REPORT TITLE			
Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Hq, 173d Airborne Brigade (Monograph of HUYNH NGHIEP), 8 Jan 1969			
4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)			
Experiences of unit engaged in counterinsurgency operations, 1908 - 1969			
5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name)			
CG, 173d Airborne Brigade			
3. REPORT DATE		7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES	7b. NO. OF REFS
8 Jan 69		17	
8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.		9a. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
b. PROJECT NO.		69X001	
c. N/A		9b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)	
d.			
10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT			
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY	
N/A		OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310	
13. ABSTRACT			

15

DD FORM 1 NOV 68 1473

UNCLASSIFIED

Security Classification